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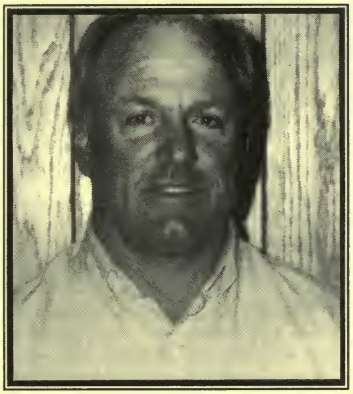
*Summer 1998*

# *Montana Department of Labor and Industry* NEWS



## Hill Named UI Administrator

▸ **Jean Branscum**

Commissioner Pat Haffey named Jim Hill as the Unemployment Insurance Divison Administrator effective July 20, 1998. Jim replaces Denny Zeiler who retired from state government.

"I respect Jim for his leadership and commitment to providing exceptional customer service," stated Commissioner Haffey. She noted Jim has been part of the department's management team the past ten years working as a bureau chief in both the Employment Relations and Job Service Divisions.

Jim began working for the department in 1973 when he was hired by Missoula Job Service. He transferred to the Helena central office two years later to assist with the Welfare to Work training program. In 1986 he became assistant manager at the Helena Job Service Center followed by an eight year stint as the Administrative Services Bureau Chief which began in 1988. Most recently he has served as the Workers' Compensation Bureau Chief at the Employment Relations Division.

## HJR 10 Work Group Wraps Up Work

▸ **John Andrew**

On June 22, 1998, the work group formed as a result of House Joint Resolution 10 to investigate optional integrated approaches to employment related dispute resolution, held its last meeting. As requested, the group will make its recommendations to the Commissioner and the 1999 legislature. In making these recommendations the work group applied to its decision making the standards of fairness, due process, consistency (public policy considered), simplification and clarification of process, speedy resolution, accessibility, cost effectiveness, appropriateness of citizen review, and consistency with federal mandates.

The group has not completed its final report. The following is a partial list of recommendations from a co*ndensed version of the draft recommendations.* If you are interested in reading all of the recommendations, please contact John Andrew.

1. Have the Workers' Compensation Court assume jurisdiction on various issues which are presently within the jurisdiction of the DLI.
2. Allow the Workers' Compensation Court to assess a penalty against a person convicted of theft of workers' compensation benefits.
3. Provide an initial investigative phase for all department processes, except UI benefit cases.
4. Provide informal mediation efforts, if agreed to by the parties, for all department processes except UI benefit cases.
5. Provide a mandatory mediation phase for all department processes except UI benefit cases.
6. Human Rights Commission & associated processes should continue as is recognizing some changes may be in order as a result of extensive revisions from the previous legislative session.
7. Eliminate the appellate role of Board of Personnel Appeals (BPA) in reviewing wage claim disputes and provide the decisions of DLI hearing examiners be appealable to the district courts.
8. Continue the appellate role of BPA in its traditional role of reviewing matters relating to Collective Bargaining Act for Public Employees, Fish, Wildlife and Parks and Department of Transportation statutory grievance procedures.
9. Establish a time frame for filing wage complaints to be the same as other employment disputes.
10. Establish a period for recovery of improperly paid wages.
11. Eliminate the Board of Labor Appeals and provide the decisions of the DLI hearing examiners be appealable to the district courts.

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# COMMISSIONER'S CORNER

## Outreach Efforts

As we prepare for the next legislative session, I am struck by a theme that is apparent throughout many of our legislative proposals. We have consulted with Montanans who are affected by the programs we administer. We have listened to their concerns and suggestions for improvement. We have incorporated their suggestions and we have made adjustments to our proposals based on their good advice. Without abandoning our responsibility to enforce and administer laws so that there is a level playing field for employees and employers, we met our commitment to be responsive to the public.

Listed below are examples of outreach efforts and public participation activities that have resulted in better services and improved understanding about the mission and responsibilities of the department. I am grateful to department employees who have taken extra time and made extra effort to ensure the people we serve have had an opportunity to participate in refining the services we provide.

**OUTREACH - Town Meetings**

The commissioner and administrators met with a total of about 150 citizens in Great Falls, Glasgow, Cut Bank, Glendive, Lewistown and Anaconda. Issues included: questions about workers' compensation and independent contractors; inquiries about expanded employer services through local Job Service Centers; clarification of the DLI role in helping welfare reform succeed; comments about the convenience and confusion of the Unemployment Insurance telephone claims program; reaction to the legislative changes to the Human Rights Program. We also met with journalists from local newspaper, radio, and television stations to discuss current topics related to employment.

ACTION PLAN - DLI continues its commitment to: maintain Job Service Centers throughout the state; present Assistance to Business Clinics to communities throughout the year; and fine tune the telephone claims program.

**OUTREACH - Workers' Compensation Regulatory Advisory Council**

A 19 member council, appointed by the Governor, represented workers' compensation insurers, providers, organized labor, legislators, citizens and claimants. The council studied the role and purpose of workers compensation regulation and evaluated the methods and cost of meeting statutory and administrative goals.

ACTION PLAN - DLI will prepare legislation based on advisory council recommendations.

**OUTREACH - House Joint Resolution 10**

Representatives from organized labor, employees, employers, plaintiff's attorneys, defendant's attorneys, and agency staff met over a period of one year to examine a process for streamlining employment appeals while ensuring fairness, due process, and consistent public policy.

ACTION PLAN - DLI will reorganize mediation and hearings functions with a goal toward resolving employment disputes at the lowest possible level - through increased mediation efforts. The department will consider legislation to: transfer certain Workers Compensation matters to the Workers' Compensation Court; eliminate the Board of Labor Appeals and eliminate the appellate role of the Board of Personnel Appeals and create an appeal process to the district courts.

**OUTREACH - Human Rights Meetings**

Legislation passed during the 1997 session resulted in loss of the right to process claims in lieu of the Department of Housing and Urban Development. Approximately $350,000 in federal funding was subsequently denied. The department, the Governor, and Montana's Congressional representatives challenged the decision to deny funding. However, the federal agency would no longer recognize Montana as a substantially equivalent state and continued federal funding was denied.

ACTION PLAN - Representatives from the department consulted with realtors' representatives and chamber members, and met with Montanans in five cities to discuss changes to statute and the value of obtaining federal funding to process discrimination claims. The department will request general fund money to continue Montana's constitutional and statutory commitment to prevent discrimination. The department will continue to work with the these representatives and the legislature to address changes to statute and to assess the value of returning to substantial equivalency status.

**OUTREACH - Electrician Apprenticeship Rations**

Senator Ken Miller and I invited over 10 statewide representatives from the electrical industry to form a workgroup to discuss whether there is a need for a change in the current ratio and how the current administrative rule might be utilized to affect that change. Electrical industry representatives and DLI staff worked with a facilitator for one full day addressing issues related to apprenticeship ratios.

ACTION PLAN - Proposals were combined and distributed to the electricians industry for review and comment. Adjustments to the waiver process will be implemented once public comment has been received.

**OUTREACH - Prevailing Wage**

The Montana School Boards Association and some school districts raised concern that the results of the legislation, passed in 1997, caused significant budgetary problems and inequities in their counties for some occupations. Research and Analysis Bureau staff and I met with a select group of school representa-

*continued on page 12*

# Collective Bargaining Session Discussing Pay and Benefits

**Ken McElroy**

Collective bargaining sessions covering economic issues (pay and benefits) for the next biennium have been in progress for several months now. The parties have engaged in philosophical discussions regarding some new pay concepts such as broad band pay plans (fewer pay grades with wider pay ranges) and competency based pay. Recently, the state's representatives have indicated that they have decided not to push for statewide implementation of a competency based and/or broad band pay system during the next biennium (7/1/99 to 6/30/2001), but will focus on moving forward with some pilot projects during that time period.

Meanwhile, labor and management representatives have reviewed the data in the state's most recent market pay survey and agreed that overall, the rates of pay for state employees are running about 15% behind the market. Labor representatives have made an initial salary proposal which calls for pay range adjustments which would result in universal 6% increases in each year of the biennium and for new progression "steps" (target market ratios) in the range between "market" and "maximum". All employees who are not already at maximum would then get "progression" raises on their anniversary date in addition to the proposed 6% increase. The labor representatives have also asked the state authorize independent agency by agency bargaining over various pay additives such as differential pay, hazardous duty pay, etc. In the past, the state has negotiated a limited number of pay additives at the individual agency level, but has generally held that most pay issues must be negotiated solely at the statewide level bargaining sessions. The state's chief negotiator, Labor Relations Bureau Chief Paula Stoll, calculates the cost of the pay raises in the current union proposal at approximately $136 million over the biennium. While the state has not issued a counter proposal yet, it is safe to assume that the state's initial proposal will be substantially less costly. The next scheduled bargaining session will be August 26,1998.

**Labor representatives have proposed a 6% pay increase each year and the addition of progression "steps"**

# A Day in the Life

**Jean Branscum and Amber Thomas**

State agencies reached out to communities this spring asking youth to participate in the annual Take Our Daughters to Work event sponsored by ICCW (Interdepartmental Coordinating Committee for Women). Over 100 boys and girls responded. The Department of Labor and Industry was again a strong supporter having close to 20 employees step forward to volunteer to be shadowed by a 7th grader for a morning. The day was rewarding for both the youth and the volunteers. As we journeyed back to the State Capitol to end the day, the youth commented about their experience. "Totally awesome" was the phrase of one youth who shadowed Suzanne Payton in the UI Phone Claims Unit. "Lots of fun" and "A great day" were other comments. One of the youth participating was Amber Thomas, a delightful 7th grader from Clancy. I visited with Amber about her day in the department and asked her to write her thoughts down. The following is Amber's thoughts with a few additions from my interview of her.

Amber with her mom, Yvonne Sutliff

**My name is Amber Thomas, and my Mom's name is Yvonne Sutliff. I have gone with her the last two years to the Department of Labor and Industry on Take Our Daughters to Work Day. I enjoyed going to the Capitol and listening to Marc Racicot, Judy Martz and the other people speak. It was neat listening to the speakers, they were funny and I heard about their experiences. Also, I liked shadowing my Mom and getting to learn about what she does.**

**My Mom works in the Fiscal Support Bureau. It's amazing what she does. She has to work with equations. I got to learn how Time Distribution is done and my Mom showed me how payments are made on the Statewide Budget and Accounting System.**

**For lunch we had pizza and pop in the first floor conference room with the rest of the people participating in Take Our Daughters to Work Day. This was my favorite part of the day as I got to hear what everybody else did that day. After lunch we went across the street to the Capitol and looked at the memorial for the highway patrol men killed in action. Then we met back up with our buses and went back to school.**

Amber plans to be a scientist one day. When I asked if she learned anything that day she stated, "I learned that women can honestly move up and do the jobs that men have. They are just as capable as men to do a job." Best of luck to Amber and the others who joined us that day.

## WORKERS' COMPENSATION COURT

▸ **Mickey Lindgren**

In June the Court's law clerk, Trish McHugh, left to take a position with the Air Force JAG in Cheyenne, Wyoming. We all miss Trish and her perky spirit. Ali Sheppard will be joining the Court as our new law clerk effective August 17. She is a graduate of the Montana School of Law and will take her bar exam the end of July.

On July 25, the Court proposes to adopt a new procedural rule regarding motions for reconsideration. The Court believes that the ability to reconsider and change an order or decision is essential since it may have overlooked some critical matter or argument that affects a ruling. The proposed new rule formalizes the Court's current practice and eliminates controversy as to whether the Court has that authority.

# PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT

## The U. I. Benefits Support Section

▸ **Nan Nail**

The Benefits Support Section provides a myriad of support services to the Unemployment Insurance Benefits Bureau all of which are crucial to the timely processing of unemployment claims. The Section is comprised of three receptionists/typists, two who provide file/records management services, a Leadworker and a Section Supervisor. Section staff are cross-trained in all areas to insure efficient service even during periods when they are "short staffed."

The Section provides receptionist and switchboard services and is, for many callers, their first contact with the unemployment insurance process. They are responsible for referring potential claimants to the appropriate phone center and referring calls throughout the Unemployment Insurance Division and State government. They also receive people who come to the Benefits Bureau in person seeking personal assistance with a claim. They make every effort to connect visitors with someone who can provide them with the information they need. When not on the phone or assisting a walk-in visitor, three Section staff members provide word processing services for the Bureau.

Pictured: Sheryal Strong, Jeanie Erickson, Colleen Brockett, Sharon Norley, Renee Wuertley, Susan Brumfield, and Nan Nail. Not pictured: Windy Knutson.

The Benefits Support Section is also responsible for maintaining and keeping track of individual claimant files. Not a small task considering the number of claims for unemployment benefits filed each year and the number of steps involved in processing those claims. Very few files are misplaced, but if it does happen that file is pursued by Section staff with the tenacity of an F.B.I. investigator, almost always with positive results.

Staff members are encouraged to suggest ways of upgrading and streamlining processes. Currently, they are involved in several projects that will help lead the way in implementing technological advances, such as the Microsoft Conversion, as well as improvements that will directly affect customer service. Their interaction with other sections within the Bureau places them in a position to provide useful input on many processes under review including, but not limited to, development of a new benefits system and an imaging study.

With the number and diversity of duties included in the section, they rely on teamwork and coordination to insure everything gets done at the proper time. In their own words, "we pride ourselves on our accuracy, speed and flexibility as well as providing courteous customer service whether those customers be internal or external."

Many of the positions in the Benefits Support Section are entry level so there can be a high turnover rate. Section staff members often move on to higher positions within the department and State government. Section Supervisor Susan Brumfield believes in instilling the same ideals in new staff members. "Our hiring process is crucial in that we are looking for candidates who are willing to adopt this philosophy. This is a vital element in maintaining and improving the level of service we provide."

# Department Committees

## EAC/ERC Happenings

▸ **Carol Rule**

They say "change is good." That's exactly what has been happening with your EAC (Employee's Advocate Committee). Most significantly , it was decided in May's planning session to change our name! We are now the Employee's Resource Committee (ERC).

**New officers elected** are: Peggy Coggeshall, Research & Analysis, Coordinator; Carol Rule, Helena Job Service, Secretary; Yvonne Sutliff, Fiscal Support, Treasurer; and Historians Nancy Rudolf, UI Phone Claims and Ray Pellen, Internal Services. Thank you to our retiring officers for their hard work on the committee. We welcome new members, Sue Schaff, Margie Guevin, and Carol Rule.

Our Adopt-A-Highway project continues on. Thanks to all who participated. Lanae Matson of Apprenticeship & Training was the winner of the prestigious "Golden Glove Award" for finding the most interesting garbage. If you covet this award yourself, we would be glad to have you at our next clean up!

**Employees of the month** selected during the quarter were **Carol Rule**, Helena Job Service in April, **Tom Coonradt**, Billings U.I. Phone Claims in May, and **Elaine O'Leary**, Bitterroot Job Service in June.

Watch your ERC bulletin board for more upcoming events.

## In Your Corner With Safety

▸ **Jean Branscum**

The issue of violence in the workplace is a safety concern of many employees. The department has actively addressed the issue over the past few years working to find practical solutions. Emergency action plans were drafted this past year so employees know what to do in the event an incident occurs on their floor or in their building. The department's Safety Committee updated the Emergency flyer to include the issue and a form to report violent or threatening behavior.

More recently, the department sponsored the safety prevention training "Street Smart From 9 to 5" in Helena. The Crisis Prevention Institute conducted this intensive four-day training program and five department employees became certified to teach the course in the department.

Those participating found the course outstanding. It teaches individuals principles and techniques that are simple and effective. It is a 'hands on' approach and participants learn skills that give them added confidence should they be confronted by an angry or hostile individual. Trainings within the department will start in September. Trainers include: Jean Branscum and Michele Wigert, Centralized Services Division; Jenny Fenchak and Nan Nail, Unemployment Insurance Division; and Sue Butler, Job Service Division.

## Labor Management Cooperation Committee

▸ **Ken McElroy**

LMCC is pleased to announce that the employee *Incentive Award Program* has been completed for the year and the review committee has selected two separate nominations to receive awards:

1) Raini Williams' nomination of the **Employee Relations Division staff** for adopting a computer letterhead macro and printing their letterhead on recycled paper documented substantial actual cost savings. The shared cash award will be used to support their "needy family" Christmas project and to have a "celebration pizza party" in recognition of everyone's contribution to this achievement.

**Congratulations Award Recipients!!!**

2) The Job Service team of **Annette Miller, Kelly Chapman, Kathy Steil & Lynn Long**, who submitted their Workforce Training Team's "mobile computer training lab" project for consideration, were selected to receive achievement awards for this innovative project. The award committee cited the outstanding customer satisfaction level, efficiency of operation and effectiveness of the project in fostering teamwork and cohesiveness, as basis for their determination.

**LMCC reminds all department employees that NOW is the time to begin work on nominations for next years Incentive award program.** There are **DOLLARS ($$$)** to be had for the effort! Program guidelines require nominees do considerable work to document their efforts and accomplishments - so advance planning is needed, but those who have made the effort in the past two years have been well rewarded. We ***know*** that there are other meritorious ideas and projects currently hatching out there and ***now is the time to begin your documentation.***

Meanwhile, your Labor Management Cooperation Committee (LMCC) is trying to refocus on the Performance Appraisal issue. The Personnel office is working on a revised agency performance assessment policy to be discussed at a future LMCC meeting. We are going to design a procedure with an eye toward compatibility with the state's new human resources software.

The committee has had substantial turnover in representation since our last "Interest bargaining" training, so we invited Paul Melvin and Kathy Van Hook to conduct that training at our last meeting. New members include Harold Nanto, Billings (Management-large Job Service office), Barry Remus, Havre Job Service, has been named to fill the vacancy representing the small job service offices, and Angela Priest, Missoula, has been appointed to fill the labor spot for large Job Service Offices. Additional vacancies were created recently when our CSD labor representative transferred to Job Service and our UI management representative retired. Replacements for those two positions have yet to be named.

# Information Technology Highlights

## Microsoft Conversion: Why? When? How?

▸ **Dave Nagel & Nan Nail**

Ever since the State of Montana announced it was switching to a Microsoft based computer format, three major questions have been on the minds of those affected: Why, when, and how will it affect communications?

**Why is the State switching?**

The State's ITMC (Information Technology Managers Council) and ITAC (Information Technology Advisory Council) groups determined the State of Montana should shift to a "Suite" rather than "Best of Breed" software applications. Traditionally the State has selected Best of Breed applications such as WordPerfect, Lotus, Zip!Office. However, due to the increasing importance of a 32-bit desktop software solution, MT PRRIME, e-mail strategies and standards within the computer industry, a Suite environment will work better for the State. The Suite environment is defined as a set of applications (word processing, spreadsheet and e-mail) that are integrated together and sold in one package. Some of the benefits include:

- Each application in the Suite package will have the same look and feel.
- Word processing and spreadsheets will work with each other.
- Employee training will be easier.
- Implementation and support will be less complicated.

**Is there a projected date when Microsoft will be up and running in DLI?**

Tentatively the Department of Labor and Industry will start installing the Microsoft Suite products (Word and Excel) during the Summer '98 and finish around January '99. The Department of Administration's Information Services Division (ISD) is working on the new e-mail package (Exchange/Outlook). Their tentative plan is to have the e-mail package available by January '99.

**...the rest of State government?**

As for the rest of State government, some agencies have already started installing Microsoft Office 97 while others indicate they won't convert until approximately the year 2003.

**How will the change affect interdepartmental communications?**

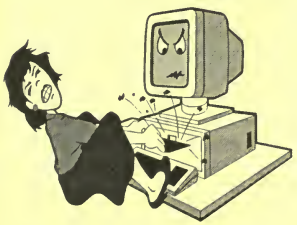
Interdepartmental communications may or may not increase. After all, State government currently has an e-mail tool called ZIP! Office. However, we definitely should see an increase or at least easier access with external communications. Presently ZIP! Office does not let you reply to external e-mail, however the Exchange/Outlook will.

For further information, please contact your division's IT Users' Team representative.

## Those Pesky Microsoft Word Documents in Zip!Office

▸ **Nan Nail**

One manifestation of the changes in computer programs is we now receive Zip!Office messages in several formats. A frequently asked question is, "How do I access a Microsoft Word document sent via Zip!Office?" Here's how:



1. In Zip!Office, highlight the name of the document in your "In-tray" or open the document.
2. Click on "Copy Selected Item to A File" icon in the Zip!Office toolbar. (Icon resembles a computer disc or TV set...located 3rd to the right of the trash can.)
3. Name the file and save it to the desired drive and directory.
4. Open Microsoft Word. This can be done by clicking once on the "Start" button, select "Programs," select Microsoft Word.
5. Select "File" in the Menu toolbar.
6. Click "Open."
7. Select the drive and directory where the document was stored.
8. Open the document.

If you do not have Microsoft Word installed on your computer, you will need to contact the sender of the message and request they convert the document to a WordPerfect 5.0 file and e-mail it again.

# Information Technology to Become More "User Friendly"

‣ **Nan Nail**

"IT" is an acronym we hear with more frequency lately. It stands for Information Technology...which is the latest term describing technology for automated information sharing. Because of the sweeping changes affecting all aspects of computer use it is apparent there is a great need for inter and intra departmental coordination. The result was the formation of five Information Services Cross Division Teams: Automation Supervisors, Network/Desktop, Database, Internet Support and Users' Team.

Users' Team members see its team functioning as an on-going liaison between technology users and information technology providers. The team was originally slated to be a short-term, information gathering group. Early discussions showed team members agreed the concept could be developed into a forum for exchange of information between those who use technology on a daily basis and those who provide and support that technology. Commissioner Haffey and the DLI Administrators agreed with this concept and approved a project outline.

The Users' Team will provide a place where staff can submit questions, broach problems and get information on what's happening with technology within the department. The Team has accepted responsibility for promoting information exchange between users and other IT Teams.

The first item on the agenda for the Users' Team is to gather input and prepare a list of staff technology needs, concerns and expectations. Prioritized lists will be compiled, similar items combined and recommendations submitted to the Automation Supervisors Team for consideration. Their responses will be made available through the Users' Team.

The Users' Team hopes to begin publishing a newsletter containing information on technology geared toward the user and answers to some of the most frequently asked questions. Readers will be able to submit questions and concerns and have them addressed in the newsletter.

This is a time of great change in computer technology within state government. Computer technology in general is advancing at an ever increasing rate so information exchange between all levels of involvement will become increasingly essential. Anyone with questions about technology is encouraged to contact IT Users' Team members: Gary Holt, ERD; Sharon Maher, Job Service; and Nan Nail, U.I. Benefits.

# MISTICS

‣ **John Hawe**

The requirements definition phase of the project is in full swing. In order to maximize productivity, the DLI project team has co-located with KPMG at their offices in the Mountain West Bank building on N. Montana Ave. There are 14 major functions to be defined in this process. The requirements work is split into four separate tracks operating simultaneously. Weekly meetings are held to define cross track integration. The following describes the functional areas each track is now working on.

***Track 1*** **– Take Claim/Interfaces**

- The take claim function preliminary deliverable has been accepted/signed. The requirements for this function has been defined by the project team, reviewed by appropriate staff, and the results have been stored in the Oracle case repository.
- Interfaces defines the systems which interact with the benefits system. ICON is an example of such an interface.

***Track 2*** **- Document management/ Non-monetary**

- Document management is well underway.
- Non-monetary definition has begun.

***Track 3*** **- Monetary / Wage system**

- The project team and key people reviewed the function on 7/9/98. Changes identified are being incorporated.
- The wage system definition has begun.

***Track 4*** **– Payments/Charging**

- Payments function definition is continuing. Charging will begin soon.

In addition to the functions being defined by these tracks the following tasks are also underway:

- The **appeals** function has been reviewed with the project team. Staff review will occur soon.
- Work continues on the **data model and conversion requirements.**
- The **project web page** is being developed and will be available to all staff with Internet access. The web page will be utilized to update interested parties as to the current status of the project. It will be used to track the status of policy issues that need to be resolved during requirements definition. Information will be provided on how to access when it becomes available.
- **Imaging study** – An analysis and feasibility study of our imaging requirements has been completed. The results of this study will allow us to make a decision on whether or not we can go forward with implementing this exciting new technology.

We anticipate this phase of the project to be completed by the end of September.

## Information Technology Highlights

# Quality Projects . . . A Summer Round Up

*The next two pages of the newsletter are in recognition of the many teams and employees in the department who continually strive to improve how we do business. We celebrate their successes to better satisfy our customer needs and to provide our customer value for their tax dollars.*

## Unemployment Insurance Division Looks Inward

▸ **Jon Moe and Roy Mulvaney**

In response to major changes occurring in the UI Division, management and staff recently invested time and effort looking inward. The UI Division Management Team developed a management philosophy and, in conjunction with staff, developed shared values *to provide excellent customer satisfaction and to realize our vision of being the best Unemployment Insurance Program in the nation.* To no one's surprise the management philosophy and shared values meshed together. Results of these efforts were shared with employees at the March UI Division meeting.

**Management Philosophy**

The process that led to developing a management philosophy is referred to as "leadership alignment". We identified common elements from our individual styles. Making decisions with those common elements in mind help to keep us focused on what we all value.

The team contributed elements of individual management philosophies resulting in a list representing a collective philosophy. The list includes *teamwork, respect, empowerment, communication, trust and leadership with customer satisfaction as the centerpiece.* For each element, a "simple truth" was developed. For customer satisfaction that truth is, "the customer defines quality." Prescriptions were also developed. The prescription for customer satisfaction being, "Treat others as you would like to be treated." Also developed were lists of action items to keep the philosophy alive and visible to staff and customers.

**Shared Values**

Shared Values are "people values" necessary for the realization of our vision, "Montana's Unemployment Insurance Division is the best in the nation." They focus on *respect, communication, individuality, encouragement, equality, and teamwork* and are the result of input from each person in the division.

A Change Management Committee (CMC) was created to help staff successfully deal with changes within the UI Division. The CMC conducted brainstorming sessions and an issues list was created. This, along with Strategies for Implementation, was presented to the Management Team which pledged its full support. The final version was shared with division staff and the Montana Public Employees Association and received full support.

The UI Management Philosophy and Shared Values is a living document that will be reviewed annually. If anyone would like further information, feel free to contact a member of the UI Management Team or Change Management Committee.

## Hearings Looks to Improve Process

▸ **Jean Branscum**

A process improvement team has been formed to examine the current hearings process. Since the hearings process impacts three divisions, representatives from the Centralized Services Division, Employment Relations Division and Unemployment Insurance Division are participating in this effort to find meaningful improvements.

The members of the project team include: Anne MacIntyre, Bernadine Warren, Terry Spear, and Chris Noland, CSD; John Andrew, Raini Williams and Drea Brown, ERD; Jon Moe and Mary Buswell, UI; and Kevin Braun, Legal Services.

The project team has just begun meeting and have completed an opportunity statement. The team will first examine the hearings processes for non-UI cases and develop standards by which to measure timeliness and productivity in the hearing context.

## Workers' Compensation Advisory Council

▸ **Keith Messmer**

The council authorized by the 1997 legislature continues to meet to review Montana's system for regulating workers' compensation. The council is finalizing recommendations which will be given to the governor.

Some of the recommendations adopted thus far would: establish a workers' compensation employer and employee advisor program, require claims to be adjusted by in-state adjustors, increase staffing for safety enforcement, provide research staff for analysis of workers compensation system data, and expand incentives for employers to hire individuals certified under the Subsequent Injury Fund.

The round up continues . . .

## Mystical Things are Happening in Unemployment Insurance

**Joanne Loughney-Finstad**

In February, UI entered into an agreement with KPMG Peat Marwick to build a new automated benefit system. The system will cost over $4 million. The project is called "MISTICS" -- Montana's Integrated System to Improve Customer Service. The name reflects the major goal of the project -- to be able to gather complete information and to process it as accurately and quickly as possible. A more user-friendly system will result in users who are more customer friendly. MISTICS will be designed on amid-tier Oracle platform using Oracle design and developer tools.

Looking into the Crystal Ball, Merlin says....The new system is scheduled to come on-line by September 1, 1999. The time line is critical because of lack of Year 2000 compliance on the old system and because we need to integrate MISTICS with POINTS, which is the Dept. of Revenue's integrated tax system. Just in case Merlin's Crystal Ball is a little murky, the UI programming staff has embarked on some Year 2000 contingency endeavors.

The KPMG and UI track teams established September 30, 1999 to complete the requirements definition phase. Currently, we have completed one of four major tracks (Take Claim) and are 80% finished with the Monetary track.

Our bag of magic contains some nifty communication tools. KPMG is setting up an intranet WEB page so all UI staff can view issue discussion papers, project tracking, resource need lists and other project information. It will be operational July 24, 1998. If you're interested in seeing our Requirements Definition develop, you may observe the progress thermometers on third floor.

UI staff are making a supernatural effort. There are five project staff members: Jeanne Murphy, Teresa Tomich, Paula Welsh, Rachel Bawden and Margo Anderson along with the Project Director, John Hawe. The Steering Committee is composed of Jim Hill, Joanne Loughney-Finstad, Drew Anderson, Jon Moe and Debbie Olson. Other staff are working diligently on project tracks, resolving issues, backfilling positions and covering regular work so their co-workers can answer the call to serve. Staff and stakeholders contributed over 800 ideas to improve the old system.

Due to space limitations, most of the project team moved to the Mountain West Building so they can partner closely with Tim Peterson, KPMG Project Director and other vendor staff.

If you have any questions, you may contact John Hawe at 444-5619 or Joanne Loughney-Finstad at 444-2747.

## UI and Job Service --- Partners in Customer Satisfaction

**Jon Moe, UI Benefits Bureau Chief**

We are in the midst of change. Changes have and will continue to occur in how we provide services, how we are organized, and how we are funded. What has not changed is that, in many instances, we have common customers needing our services. The role various agencies play in serving customers has changed considerably (phone claims is one example of these changes) but we all continue to be focused on understanding our customers' needs and providing the best possible customer service.

The Job Service Division and the Unemployment Insurance (UI) Division formed a workgroup in Fall of 1997 consisting of staff from both divisions to address the changing roles of our respective programs. The initial charge for this workgroup has been to: **1. Review the UI role in the local office.** This is being done in the context of "One Stops" and Workforce Development. What information do Job Service local offices need from UI to best serve Job Service customers? Likewise, what information does UI need from Job Service to best serve UI customers? What information needs to be shared by the two divisions to insure that both have the information and tools necessary to provide excellent service? How can each branch of our agency portray the role of the other to it's customers in the most constructive and positive way? **2. Review the Work Registration process.** Is there a simpler and possibly automated way to effect a work registration that insures the UI claimant access to the appropriate Job Service services and employment opportunities?

In a little over six months, the committee has accomplished a great deal. The "work registration" process is close to being automated. Any pertinent information that the UI Telephone Claims Center collects in the claims taking process will be electronically transmitted to Job Service to initiate the claimant's work application in the Job Service Eagle system. A claimant will still be required to contact the Job Service to complete the registration, but about 20 data elements will have already been entered into their application. This will save time for both the Job Service staff and the claimant/job seeker.

In addition, the committee has developed a script for use by reception staff at each local office to help provide consistent information and service to the potential UI claimant that enters a Job Service office. The committee is in the process of identifying what type of information needs to be available in the Resource Centers of each Job Service office to represent the UI role in the "one-stop" service model. One item to be included is a list of "frequently asked questions" about UI with answers to each included.

The committee has been a great example of two divisions with common customers working together to best serve those customers. The committee welcomes suggestions for other ways to address customer satisfaction and generally improve the services and information we provide. Committee members from Job Service are Nancy Axtell (Bozeman), Roxanne Bullard (Great Falls), Janis Duffy (Lewistown), June Littlefield (Polson), and Ron Ostrander (Job Service Central Office). UI members are Carol Deegan, Roy Mulvaney and Jon Moe (UI Central Office), Shirley Rush, Niel Mullarkey and Sandy Maul (Telephone Claims Centers).

# INDIVIDUAL SPOTLIGHT

## June Littlefield - Lake Co. Job Service Center

‣ **Mike Shoquist**

June Littlefield began her career with Job Service as an Employment Assistant December 17, 1990. She was promoted to Employment Services Specialist January 9,1993. She has spent most of her Job Service Career working with employers, filing unemployment insurance claims and helping persons seeking employment. She is very energetic, caring, and has a great sense of humor.

She has become very involved in promoting and coordinating Job Fairs for students in Lake County. Her dedication to students extends to coordinating a career fair for students in junior high who are about to enter high school in Ronan and Polson. She is very active with the local JSEC.

June and her husband Bill, own a small cattle ranch about 12 miles West of Polson. She is very active in her church. She teaches Sunday School and is the Church secretary. June is one who loves to "Shop till she drops"; especially when out of town. June is orginally from North Carolina. Her family is very important to her and she nearly always spends her vacation visiting relatives.

## Change Program Launched

The Department of Revenue (DOR) has launched a comprehensive change program called Project META. POINTS (**P**rocess **O**riented **I**ntegrated **T**ax **S**ystem) is the technology portion of the project. The intent of the POINTS project is to design and develop a computer system that will provide the technology support for moving DOR closer to its vision of how future services will be delivered and to carry out the mandates of recently enacted Legislation. Excellent customer service and efficient operations are major goals of DOR.

DOR has contracted with a consulting firm, UNISYS Corporation, to conduct the two components of the POINTS project, one component being the building of the system and the other, conducting a Property Tax Needs Assessment. In a partnership effort the department has assigned a team to complete the assessment over the course of the summer. This team will be in contact with the counties to request information and help the department and the counties identify needs and requirements associated with the property valuation and billing process. Based on this analysis, the department intends to go forward to develop a property tax system which will integrate into the departments process re-engineering and meet the needs of local government as well.

## Credit Union Seeks More Members

• **Tina Hash**

Okay, tell the truth. How many of you know there's a credit union strictly for Montana Department of Labor employees?

And it's been around since 1954. According to Harold Kansier, one of the founding members, the Employment Security Federal Credit Union was originally intended for IAPES (International Association of Personnel in Employment Security) members because there wasn't that kind of banking service available to them at that time.

Kansier said prior to 1984, the credit union was located in state buildings, including the Mitchell and Walt Sullivan buildings, and the U.S. Department of Labor furnished the time sheets with a code for credit union work.

Some of the original members of the credit union are still members today. The office is located in Helena across the street from the Montana *Rail Link* depot at 1437 Helena Ave. The office hours are 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on State of Montana observed holidays. Employees and former employees of the Montana Department of Labor who work or worked in any Montana office and their families, may join for a $25 deposit in a checking or savings account. Kansier said many of the current members are children of employees and former employees. You can obtain a membership application by calling the credit union at 406-449-8690.

Three employees manage the Employment Security Federal Credit Union: Harold Kansier, treasurer; Joe Kansier, manager; and Jane Hohn, teller. There are five members of the board of directors: Bob Rafferty, president; Harold Kansier, treasurer; Andy Dandro, secretary; and Fred Patten and Judy Nelson. Kansier said the credit union offers savings and checking accounts, loans for mobile homes, cars, trucks, RVs, debt consolidation, etc., and also financial assistance and counseling and notary public service.

# Competency Based Human Resource Systems

**Ken McElroy**

In a recent *Thoughts from the Commissioner,* Commissioner Haffey indicates our commitment as an agency to beginning the process of inserting "competencies" into our human resource tools (performance assessments, position descriptions, etc.) Right now you may be wondering, "What's the deal with these competencies"?

As agency personnel officer, I have been aware of a statewide policy commitment to the "competency" approach and have been concerned about how to move the department into competency based human resource management. Consequently, I have just returned from attendance at a national, *Competency-Based Performance Management and Pay Conference.* In attendance were hundreds of human resource professionals representing both private and public sector employers who are at various stages in the implementation of such systems. In particular, I discovered that the state of Colorado is engaged in a statutorily mandated move toward competency based human resource management. In addition, I attended a workshop sponsored by the Virginia Department of Transportation which has successfully installed such a system. There was general optimism and enthusiasm regarding the shared rewards to be had through moving to such systems.

**Since the fundamental building block is competencies, employees have greater opportunities for career growth and can become more marketable.**

Meanwhile, however, our Department of Administration has announced that they do not anticipate implementing a broad band pay system with a competency pay component in the next biennium. What does this mean for us in terms of our adoption of "competency" systems? The primary impact will be that, for the foreseeable future, we will continue to have our pay and grade set based upon the benchmark classification system combined with our tenure in those jobs. This has historically meant that there is pressure to "upgrade" jobs through classification to recognize growth and/or superior performance on the part of individual employees. The classification system is not designed to recognize individual achievement or growth, however, which results in an perpetual tension between: managers who are looking for meaningful ways to recognize superior performance and skills; employees who are looking for avenues for career growth; and the Personnel Bureau's "classification" function which is tasked with maintaining strict internal equity under a narrowly defined "job" based system.

Nonetheless, as an employer the state is substantially committed to a competency based approach to human resource management by virtue of having purchased the 17 million dollar Peoplesoft software to replace our legacy information systems (PPP). The human resource module of that software is designed around "best practice" competency systems. The software revolves around "role" (formerly job) descriptions couched in terms of the levels and types of competencies needed for agency "role" players to contribute to the accomplishment of the agency mission and goals. Employees are then assessed as to the types and levels of competencies (skills, abilities, knowledge and behaviors) which they possess and exhibit. Since the fundamental building block is competencies, employees have greater opportunities for career growth (i.e. "role" growth), become more marketable should they choose to leave employment with the state, and can focus their efforts upon gaining the competencies needed to grow in their careers. All of those benefits are inherent in competency based HR management. Consequently, we can anticipate spending considerable time and effort in the transition to such a system.

The Department of Labor and Industry has been a leader in embracing new and better approaches to serving our customers - both internal and external - through such avenues as "quality works". As we become more familiar with the elements of this new human resource management system I believe that we will see that it is highly compatible with our agency vision - specifically with respect to our commitments to quality service, to personal empowerment, to optimum career growth opportunity through flexibility of roles, and to maximized use of our Human Resources. I believe we will emerge from the process a stronger and more effective agency.

The **Montana Department of Labor and Industry's** *News* is published quarterly for the department's employees.

**EDITOR:** Jean Branscum
**ASSISTANT EDITOR:** Diane West
**PHOTOGRAPHER:** Steve Duthie

**VOLUNTEER STAFF:**
Tina Hash, Job Service Division
Nan Nail, Unemployment Insurance Division
Mickey Lindgren & Clara Wilson, Workers' Compensation Court
Bev Pickett & Mary Schilla, Centralized Services Division
Kara Christianson, Employment Relations Division

Contact Jean at 444-1520 or Diane at 444-6845 if you have comments on this issue or have suggestions for articles.

# IN RECOGNITION

## Long Announced Runner-up For International Award

▸ **Jean Branscum**

The International Association of Personnel in Employment Security (IAPES) announced Lynn Long, Helena Job Service Center Manager, as runner-up in the category of Individual Award of Merit in the IAPES Awards Competition for 1997.

The Individual Award of Merit is given to individuals who have demonstrated outstanding service or achievement in the employment and training field. Lynn received the award for her exceptional efforts to involve the public in determining what employment services offered by Job Service are of value to customers and how those services can best be delivered.

Lynn was nominated after completing work to re-engineer the Job Service Division. She developed a communications plan and delivered presentations in 24 communities across Montana. Based on the public input at these community meetings, Job Service evaluated the services being delivered and re-engineered business processes to improve customer satisfaction.

## Bubba & the Tight Buns

▸ **Diane West**

Congratulations to the department's 12 teams who accepted the Spring Fitness "98" Challenge. The teams were recognized by Governor Racicot in a ceremony held June 18. One department team received a special award for the most unique name, ***Bubba & the Tight Buns***!! Team members included: Karen Doig, Diana Ferriter, Kay Henry, Ann Komac, Nikki Noland, Charlotte Payne, John Svaldi and Linda Wilson.

## LMI's Home Page Selected For Exclusive Award

▸ **Diane West**

Labor Management Information's Home Page has been selected to receive a Links2Go Key Resource Award in the Census Data topic. Dave Ducello credits Casey Greenwood's work in keeping the LMI's WEB site easy to use and current as the reason for their selection.

The Links2Go Key Resource award is both exclusive and objective. Fewer than one page in one thousand will ever be selected for inclusion. The Links2Go Key Resource award is based on how actual page authors index and organize links on their pages.

## Commissoner's Corner

*continued from page 2*

tives to explain the methodology used for setting prevailing wage rates. School district representatives understood the methodology and made suggestions for changes that would better represent targeted non-construction service occupations in each geographical location.

ACTION PLAN - Research and Analysis Bureau staff will continue to meet with Montanans affected by prevailing wage rate determinations to ensure all relevant factors are included in establishing prevailing wage rates. They will also continue to utilize a methodology which meets high standards of accuracy and fair representation in determining wage and benefit rates.

## PERSONNEL CHANGES

**April - July, 1998**

**LEAVING DLI during this period were:**

John McCoy, Missoula JS - Retired
Robert Blanton, Polson JS
John McCarthy, UI Benefits
Ann Pierce, UI Benefits - Retired
Cal Boyle, Anaconda/Butte JS
Merrilee Fielding, Flathead JS
Debra Morrell, Billings JS
Barb Waldron, Libby JS
Pam Grubb, Havre JS
Renee Grothmann, Miles City JS
Shelley Perrigo, UI Benefits
Richard Paul, WC Regulation
Hazel Spence, Billings Phone Center
Rhonda McClure, WC Claims Asst.
Ruth Fitzgerald, Community Services
John Patrick, Fiscal Support
Claren Neal, Legal Services - Retired
Bill Nelson, Helena JS - Retired
Ruby Foster , Helena JS - Retired
Leslie Sanderson, Libby JS
Wade Wilkison, ERD Admin.
Diane Andrews, ERD Admin.
Richard Woolett, UI Support

**NEW EMPLOYEES in Permanent Positions:**

Sylvia Stevens, Accountant, Fiscal Support
Amyee Pulver, Admin. Support, Billings JS
John Smith, Accountant, Fiscal Support
Teddi Talavela, Admin. Support, Billings Phone Center
Laurretta Fritter, Admin. Support, UI Admin
Gayle Trenary, Admin. Support, HR-ERD
Alvy Chapman, ESS, Butte JS
Kay Strayer, ESS, Missoula JS
Janet Van Dyke, ESS, Missoula JS
Catherine Haag, Programmer Analyst, ERD
Lyle Wilson, Programmer Analyst, JS
Patrick Schwarz, Programmer Analyst, ERD
Renee Carribou, Admin. Support, Billings JS
Susan Yeaman, Admin. Support, Missoula JS
Rene Adams, ESS, Polson JS
Linda McHenry, Accounting Tech, Fiscal Support
Doug Okland, ESS, Missoula JS
Cynthia Boies, ESS, Missoula JS
Heidi Andrew, Admin. Support, Community Services